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"…where there is a lot of sound…": Resistance, Subjectivity and the Trilanguaging of the Media of Enunciation in Manu Chao's *Clandestino* and *Próxima Estación… Esperanza*

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Introduction

In his seminal study *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1985), Jacques Attali proposes a conceptualization of and an analytical approach to music that significantly differs from the ones used by academic analysts at the time of his writing and, in fact, until today. He writes:

> Music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world. A tool of understanding. Today, no theorizing accomplished through language or mathematics can suffice any longer; it is incapable of accounting for what is essential in time — the qualitative and the fluid, threats and violence. In the face of the growing ambiguity of the signs being used and exchanged, the most well-established concepts are crumbling and every theory is wavering. . . . It is thus necessary to imagine radically new theoretical forms, in order to speak to new realities. Music, the organisation of noise, is one such form. (4)

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Author Note: *To my regret it has not been possible to get permissions for the sonic quotes from* Clandestino *and* Próxima Estación…Esperanza *that I had planned to integrate in this essay. I have made notes throughout of the exact time loctions in the songs that I planned to quote, and can only ask readers to get hold of the songs themselves and listen to them at the times indicated.*

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This passage contains two proposals. The first addresses the relationship of the academic scholar to the object of analysis. The second addresses the relationship of academic and musical analysis to reality. As for the first proposal, Attali suggests that academics should no longer treat music as an object of theoretical analysis, but as one form of it. Therefore, academics who write about music need to treat musicians and their work as interlocutors, not as objects of their analysis. Consequently, the topic of such an academic analysis cannot be a piece of music. Instead, the initiator of the analysis has to identify a topic that he/she and the interlocutor address but that they approach from different perspectives and through different methodologies. This shared concern has to come from the "new realities" that the new forms of theorizing need to "speak to."

This brings me to Attali's second proposal, the relationship between the different forms of analysis and realities. Attali's claim that music is a way to "speak to" realities implies that musicians no longer objectify reality by "speaking about" it; rather, they engage with realities by "speaking to" them. Someone who speaks about realities orders and organizes them. Indeed, Attali argues that this has been the task of institutionalized music up to now. Therefore, when Attali proposes an analytical practice in which theories no longer order and organize realities, but speak to them, he implicitly proposes a reshuffling of power relations between theorists and their (now former) object of analysis. This second proposal is complementary to the first one.

In this essay I take the work of the musician Manu Chao as an interlocutor, and the connection between subjectivity and resistance as a topic. Chao's work is inseparably bound up with notions and practices of resistance against overwhelming structures. Importantly, he takes into account both the individual decision and practice that forms part of resistance, and the structures and politics against which the individual resists.

In my engagement with Chao's solo albums *Clandestino* (1998) and *Próxima Estación…Esperanza* (2001) I take Attali up on his proposal to read music as a way of understanding the world. Thus, I must respond to (and not just write about) Chao's analyses and representations of his realities. Just as Chao does not subordinate music and sounds to an order or organization imposed by him, I do not seek to subordinate Chao's engagement

with realities to a theoretical, academically-minded order imposed by me. Rather, I propose to take up Attali's suggestion and join forces in the enquiry into the possibilities for practices of resistance. The aim of my analysis is the conceptualization of resistance and the creation of a discourse that does not fall into the trap of establishing an irreconcilable dichotomy between subjectivity and structure and that, consequently, will allow me to voice, propose and analyse strategies of resistance through an academic discourse, just as Chao articulates them through a musical one.

By probing Attali's proposal against a concrete musical example I develop the methodology proposed by Attali. He approaches music through an analysis of different networks that develop out of each other: sacrificing, representing, repeating, and composing. They are developed within the hegemonic structures of society. According to Attali, all these networks are at the time of his writing leading up to the network of composing, which will then dominate the production and performance of music. Until this final network is put into place, the networks in which music is produced will keep undergoing changes in terms of a progressive development. Thus, Attali focuses on the analysis of music within wider political, social and economic structures. This is necessary but not sufficient, because I am looking for an approach that allows me to connect processes of the creation and performance of music with the wider structures in which these processes takes place. The connection between the two is best brought out through an analysis of a particular case study.

This methodological shift is called for because of the political changes that have taken place since Attali published *Noise* in 1984. At this moment of Western history the proponents of two opposed ideologies — capitalism and communism — were competing with each other. When one of these ideologies — communism — lost power, the other — capitalism — became the hegemonic power. The disconnection of communism from power coincided with a shift in Capitalist politics. From the 1970s and the 1980s onwards, but especially in the 1990s, the neo-liberalist proponents of capitalism gained power and influence. Neo-liberalist economic policies are usually passed off as a reaction to the market, which is in turn presented as a "pure and perfect order, implacably unfolding the logic of its predictable consequences" (Bourdieu 94). However, it has become clear that

these policies are connected with an ideology or a utopia. The proponents of neoliberalism have imposed its ideology by combining ideology and discourse with a political programme and, in some cases, coercion. In this way, neoliberalism has managed to "organize consent," as David Harvey formulates it (Harvey 62). This has led to the establishment of an economic and political system in which discourse, ideology, and politics pervade all levels of social and political life, and reaffirm each other's logic. A system that is set up in this way makes it increasingly difficult to preserve spaces in which its discourse and/or ideology have not intruded, and in which they can still be contested.[1]

At this moment there is not an ideology or political model that is strong enough to oppose the hegemonic one, and there is no social movement that is strong enough to set a counterweight to the hegemonic neo-liberalist world order. Therefore, those who do not want to accept the world order that is currently being established cannot rely on a counterweight, or on the historical process that will lead to the end of the current network structure, as Attali did. Instead, they need to preserve and construct spaces in which the hegemonic discourse and the hegemonic politics can be questioned and contested, and a discourse that can articulate critique and alternatives without unintentionally replicating the world views wrapped into the hegemonic discourse. In this context the concept and the practice of resistance are of vital importance.

Resistance is only one of many strategies that contest power. Other possible strategies are the taking of power or the destruction of power, for example. Distinct from these two possibilities, resistance does not necessarily lead to structural changes. It is the strategy of last resource: its objective is survival and the preservation of the possibility for a different future through the preservation or the re-establishment of spaces in which the development of ideas and practices that are different to the hegemonic ones is still possible.

Importantly, resistance is tied up with the decision and the practice of each individual. The Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, spokesman of the Ejército Zapatista para la Liberación

[1] For an account of the claustrophobia brought about by this system see Marcos 2003b.

Nacional (EZLN) emphasizes this point when he writes about effective strategies of resistance[2]:

> A fundamental factor is the capacity for resistance of the aggrieved, the intelligence to combine ways of resistance, and, something which might sound "subjective," the decision-making capacities of the aggrieved human being. (Marcos 2003a, no page numbers)

The shift of my approach from that of Attali tries to account for the importance of what Marcos calls the "decision-making capacities of the aggrieved human being." Attali's focus on the hegemonic structures and their development forecloses the view on this "subjective" contribution of the human being. However, I do not mean to discard Attali's approach completely. Doing so would obscure the impact that structures and networks have on the realities in which we develop strategies of resistance.[3] My theoretical endeavour in this essay is to bring out the connection between individual agency, the conceptualization of subjectivity, and possibilities of resistance, in the context of and contesting the structures against which we develop them.

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[2] The EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) is a Mexican guerilla movement. They first appeared on the media scene in January 1994 when they took over seven major cities in the Mexican state Chiapas to resist the implementation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). The EZLN was quickly fought back by the Mexican army, but their popularity and international impact since 1994 has been immense. Their spokesman is the Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. The EZLN is a military organization. Parts of Chiapas are administered by civilian Zapatista communities.
For an analysis of the EZLN in the context of the antiglobalisation movement see for example Kingsnorth 2003. For a collection of communiqués and other texts see http://palabra.ezln.org.mx. For an account of the EZLN activity see for example Ross 2000 and Ross 2006.

[3] Recent critical theory has focused on the analysis of models of creative agency. The fact that structures define the conditions for the development and performance of creative agency has been largely neglected by the academic theorists of the North-West. For a critique of this tendency see, for example, Brennan 2006.

Subjectivity, Agency, Resistance

One prerequisite for the conceptualization of resistance that I propose is the recuperation of the concept of subjectivity on different terms than the ones laid out by the dominant Western paradigms. In these paradigms, subjectivity tends to be either conceived of as produced by class structures, or, in the Romantic tradition, as a performance of individuality in disobedience of the rules set by society.

The first, a Marxist approach, suggests that the subjectivity of the individual is determined, or at the very least is shaped by her social class and other economic conditions that define her position in society. The second approach conceives of society as irrevocably violent and as a force that limits the individual. The response to such violence is usually the withdrawal to a space outside of dominant society, where the individual's subjectivity can develop freely. The two approaches are treated as an irreconcilable dichotomy.

The first approach assigns to the individual a clearly defined position in society but does not consider those aspects of subjectivity that are unpredictable for those in power or that escape their strategies, i.e. precisely the aspects of subjectivity which are most likely to encourage resistance. The second approach neglects the fact that the powers that impose social and economic structure remain in place when the individual withdraws and that they delimit the space into which the individual can withdraw. Because they do not acknowledge this, the proponents of the second approach tend to conflate withdrawal with resistance.[4] Moreover, their approach gives little opportunity to the development of collective resistance because collectivity is almost always perceived of as an imposition. As a result of the dominance of these two approaches, strategies and conceptualizations of resistance either smother the subjectivity of the individual by an overwhelming (class) collective, or they idealize and isolate the individual. This has created an impasse, particularly for artists who seek to develop creative strategies of resistance. The Subcomandante Marcos' insistence on the fundamental importance of the capacity to combine ways of (collective) resistance with the "decision-making capacities of the

[4] See Graebner 2007.

aggrieved human being" addresses and seeks to overcome this impasse.[5]

Curiously, Attali's analysis of the musician and his role in the project of production takes recourse to a Romantic concept of artistic subjectivity, and then combines this notion with his analytical focus on structures. The result is the image of a musician who has necessarily become disempowered by the politics of sonic mass production. This brings Attali to look with nostalgia upon the musician in the age of representation:

> In repetition, the entire production process of music is very different from that of representation, in which the musician remained the relative master of what he proposed for the listener. He alone decided what to do. Of course, as soon as sound technology started to play an important role in representation, the musician was already no longer alone. But today, under repetition, the sound engineer determines the quality of the recording, and a large number of technicians construct and fashion the product delivered to the public. . . . The performer is only one element contributing to the overall quality; what counts is the clinical purity of the acoustics. (105-106)

It is doubtful whether in the age of representation the performer alone decided on all aspects of the performance. But for the purposes of this essay the image of the musician as the master of sound and performance, and as the agent of his art, is more

[5] Michael Hardt and Toni Negri address similar issues in *Multitude*. However, I disagree with their representation of the Zapatistas and their interpretation of much of their work. Statements such as that the Zapatistas "goal has never been to defeat the state and claim sovereign authority but rather to change the world without taking power" (85) in my opinion grossly simplify and romanticize the Zapatistas' objectives as well as their complex theorization of power. This formulation suggests that there are only two options to deal with power as it is: either one claims sovereign authority, or one changes the world without taking power. This formulation endorses John Holloway's reading of the Zapatistas, with which I also disagree. It leaves aside the question of what happens to power when one changes the world without taking power; will it simply disappear? The Zapatistas have confronted the realities of power much more directly than Hardt and Negri or Holloway have; they have said that they want to destroy power or change society so that there is no more base for power. This opens up a whole set of important practical questions that Hardt, Negri and Holloway do not address. I do find such questions addressed for example in the communiqués of the Zapatistas and in the work of Chao.

important than the question of whether this image is historically correct. As a consequence of this image, Attali's argument implies that the musician loses his agency to technology when protagonism is taken away from him.

Moreover, Attali argues that the individuality of the singer becomes smoothed out of the sonic text through the sound engineer's skilful use of technology. This process makes it possible for the technological apparatus and the political and social powers associated with it to appropriate themselves of the medium of the sound recording. Once they have appropriated it, they turn it into the dominant medium of making and listening to music. In this view, resistance to this appropriation of the sound recording by power comes from the individuality of the musician.

I will argue that Chao reclaims the sound recording from its appropriation by those in power without re-establishing the role of the musician as the sole creator and master of sounds. His strategies of re-appropriation include a reflection and a questioning of the notions of subjectivity that according to Attali permit agency. I will argue that he mobilizes the devices made available to him by the phonograph recording to respond to his audiences' expectations of his public figure and musical genius. Subsequently, he rejects them, and develops an alternative model of artistic subjectivity.

Importantly, and again in a rewriting of Attali's argument that the technologizing of music institutionalizes it and turns it over to those in power, Chao develops this model through the devices made available to him by the sound recording. This is even more striking in Chao's particular case because his live performances and his sound recordings are very different from each other. This indicates that he is keenly aware of the difference in dynamic and possibilities that the two media afford. His long-standing collaboration with sound engineer and producer Renaud Letang is another sign that he does not accept limits imposed by sound technology on his art, but that he makes an effort to use sound technology as an enhancement of the possibilities of music.

In the following pages I will bring out several strategies he uses, and develop a terminology that allows me to conceptualize them. The first of these strategies I will address is "the incomplete split between body and voice." Other categories that I will develop through my analysis of techniques used by Chao are the

geno-song and the pheno-song, the jongleur, the term "mentira," and the trilanguaging of media.

The Incomplete Split between Body and Voice

In his study *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts,* Douglas Kahn discusses the impact of the phonograph on sound and its perception and brings up the notion of this split. He argues that before — or separate from — the phonograph, speaking was tied up with the speaker's body:

> While other people hear a person's voice carried through vibrations in the air, the person speaking also hears her or his own voice as it is conducted from the throat and mouth through bone to the inner regions of the ear. Thus, the voice in its production in various regions of the body is propelled through the body, its resonance is sensed intracranially. . . . Yet at the same time that the speaker hears the voice full with the immediacy of the body, others will hear the speaker's voice infused with a lesser distribution of body because it will be a voice heard without bone conduction: A deboned voice. (7)

Hearing oneself, "the most wide-spread private act performed in public and the most common public act experienced within the comfortable confines of one's own body" (7), makes the speaker more conscious of herself, of the connection between her thought and her physical being. However, this moment of becoming conscious is private to the speaker. It is also ephemeral, because it is tied up with the temporally limited moment of speaking. Only fractures of a second after the moment of enunciation, the listener already experiences a different, "deboned" voice.

As a consequence, Kahn argues,

> . . . the presence produced by the voice will always entail a degree of delusion because of a difference in the texture of the sound: the speaker hears one voice, others hear it deboned. (7)

This difference between the voice the speaker hears and the voice the listener hears is even greater in the case of a recorded voice than it is in personal interaction because the recorded voice of the speaker is also temporally separated from the moment of enunciation:

> No longer was the ability to hear oneself speak restricted to a fleeting moment. It became locked in a materiality that could both stand still and mute and also time travel by taking one's voice far afield from one's own presence. (8)

Kahn addresses a separation that in my analysis will emerge as crucial for the sound recording: a split between voice and body. Yet, my analysis will qualify the split that Kahn understands to be complete. Kahn argues that:

> The voice no longer occupied its own space and time. It was removed from the body where, following Derrida, it entered the realm of writing and the realm of the social, where one loses control of the voice because it no longer disappeared. (8)

Kahn's argument resembles the one made by Attali, in spite of them making the argument from different points of view and for different purposes. Kahn on the one hand focuses on the moment of creation and on the individual experience of singer and listener. Attali on the other hand inserts his analysis of the split between body and voice into a chronology of different networks that provide the structure in which music is produced. However, both theorists describe the same phenomenon: the sound recording disconnects singers or speakers from their voices and at that moment, hands the sound recording over to those who hold most power in the social sphere.

I agree with their conclusions in so far as the technologized voice in some ways disconnects the body of the singer/speaker from the physical experience of speaking. Yet, I will make the point — and in doing so, will develop their arguments rather than contradict them — that in the oral and auditory experience the split between voice and body is not necessarily complete. The singer's/speaker's body is invisible and intangible to the listener of the sound recording. Yet, the singing voice of the singer, or the speaking voice of the speaker, insists on the singer's individuality and on his physical existence because the voice is always connected to one particular body. This incomplete split between voice and body can become a conondrum for the sonic artist because it suspends his relationship to the audience and his own position in a no-man's-land between presence and absence, between individuality and technologically determined sound, between representation and repetition.

I contend that Manu Chao turns this suspension into a productive site of reflection on the power relations at work in the sonic text. He uses the technology made available to him by the sound recording, and the incomplete split between body and voice that is its product, to reflect on and signify on top of his own and his voice's role in the sonic text. He does this by first developing a "sonic I," a text-internally produced figure that is not necessarily identical with the author, and then by deconstructing his "sonic I." This "sonic I" becomes compromised by several issues concerning agency. In a discussion of the implications of the split between body and voice for the concept of "voice" I will argue that the artist finally leaves this split intentionally incomplete.

Geno-Song or Pheno-Song: Who speaks on *Clandestino*?

Crucial to Manu Chao's construction and performance of subjectivity on his first solo album *Clandestino* is his voice performance. It is indeed one of the most striking features of the album: the nasal tonality, the variety of timbres and the tone, which is often more related to a recital than to singing, make his performance very idiosyncratic. His tone creates the sense of him telling a story to us, the listeners, rather than telling a story about someone or something to an anonymous audience. Stories are usually told in a live event to an audience. Thus, the storyteller's tone will be directly linked to his physical presence on the site of the performance: it is usually smooth in order to establish a direct link with his audience, and storytellers in comparison to singers use a relatively low voice because their audience tends to be small, and tends to be spatially close to them. In my analysis of the song "Bongo Bong" I will demonstrate that Chao uses this tone in order to capture this sense of closeness and of an invitation to direct interaction. Importantly, and in contradistinction to the function that Attali assigns to the presence of the performer, Chao does not use this technique to project his own self into the recording.

In order to bring out the techniques Chao uses to construct subjectivity through the sound recording, I will turn to a contrastive analysis of the voice performance in the songs "King of the Bongo" from the 1991 album *King of the Bongo* by Mano Negra and "Bongo Bong" from *Clandestino*. Borrowing from

Roland Barthes, I conceptualize Chao's construction of subjectivity through his voice performance in terms of "pheno-song" and "geno-song." [6]

"Bongo Bong" is based on the musical motif and the lyrics of the song "King of the Bongo," released on the album of the same name by the band Mano Negra.[7] The 1991 track "King of the Bongo" is a punk song and is clearly made for dancing. The music declares loyalty to punk and pogo in a time when disco and house were becoming increasingly popular, and the lyrics reinforce this message and make it more explicit. Still, the lyrics are subordinated to the music. The relation between the music and the lyrics as well as between the music and the voice makes this subordination clear.

The lyrics are hard to understand because the music almost drowns out the voice. The voice itself does not change much

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[6] The recording of "Bongo Bong" on *Clandestino* is also evidence of Chao's appropriation of production techniques for his own purposes. The sound engineer has used several techniques to increase the sense of proximity in Chao's voice. One such technique is that during the recording, the singer gets very close to the microphone. This increases the lowest and the highest frequencies, suggesting proximity. Another one is to compress the voice more than usual. This drastically reduces the dynamic range of the voice. The dynamic range is the difference between the loudest and the lowest level of the signal. Consequently, the body of the voice becomes fuller and gives the impression of continuous presence. Also, the way in which the other sonic elements of each sonic texts are equalized leaves a prominent place for the voice in the range of frequencies. Within these arrangements Chao's voice receives a central place within the arrangement of the other voices and sounds; it is mixed with very little reverberation, whereas the other voices and sounds maintain a higher level of reverberation. Therefore, the voice sounds closer to the listener. These examples demonstrate that in Chao's work sound technology is not used to provide "clinical purity of the acoustics," as Attali argues in the passage I quoted on page 5. On the contrary: recording techniques are used to bring the musician and the audience back into the recording. I am grateful to Misael Rodriguez for sharing this technical analysis with me.

[7] Mano Negra is the band with which Manu Chao became famous as their singer and guitarist. Mano Negra played an important part in the development of the "pachanka" or "patchanka" sound. They broke up in 1994 after a now notorious tour through Latin America. For further information and a discussion of the political and social themes in the work of Mano Negra see Rivas Gamboa 2003. For an account of the Latin America tour of Mano Negra see Chao 1994. For a biographical account of Manu Chao's trajectory see Robecchi 2002.

during the song; intensity, timbre and intonation remain the same. The singer is singing in English, with his own accent, but in this case the accent marks awkwardness rather than an appropriation of English. Because the music is more important, it dominates the language: the rhythm of the music — to which the singer is reacting — is directing the rhythm and the intonation of his singing and thus, of his performance of the language. In "The Grain of the Voice" Roland Barthes uses the term "pheno-song" to describe such a performance. He describes the pheno-song as

> all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of the interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about, which forms the tissue of cultural values . . . , which takes its bearing directly on the ideological alibis of a period . . . (182).

"King of the Bongo" is an accomplished performance in terms of the punk genre or in terms of the pachanka genre, i.e. as a pheno-song. The singer performs a musical example of the genre. But because the song itself and the performance emphasize the importance of the genre, there is no space left for the personal engagement of the singer.

Personal engagement is impossible without the involvement of subjectivity. Engaging personally with someone or something is related to exploration, and a friendly engagement requires the address of the differences and resistances that form part of the person or issue one wants to explore. In his essay "Resistance" the cellist Richard Sennett argues that the performance of music is inseparably related to the exploration of resistance, and that the subjectivity of the singer manifests itself primarily in this exploration:

> For musicians, the sense of touch defines our physical experience of art: lips applied to reed, fingers pushing down keys or strings. It might seem that the more easily we touch, the better we play, but facility is only half the story. A pianist or a violinist must constantly explore resistance, either in the instrument or in the musician's own body. (481)

In Chao's singing performance of "King of the Bongo," the voice is not engaging with the resistance of the music or the

language, with the resistance of the singer's natural speech rhythm to the English language (or of the English language to the singer's accent and natural speech rhythm), or with the resistance of the singer's body, which seems to be under considerable strain during the whole performance. On the contrary: the performance shows the singer's rebellion against the resistance that his own body affords, not his engagement with this part of his own performing self. Thus, the singer's physical presence remains unaddressed; it is negated rather than engaged with. As a consequence, the voice remains ephemeral and does not receive a sense of materiality. But in the absence of materiality, touch becomes impossible.[8]

"Bongo Bong" performs a different engagement with resistance. While the song is based on "King of The Bongo" and the lyrics are almost identical, the stanzas that place the song in the context of specific musical styles are left out and as a consequence, the overall meaning of the lyrics changes. The song is now telling the story of a street musician who comes from the jungle to the big city. There he is insulted and pushed around, and nobody wants to listen to him. Still, the street musician continues to be enamoured with his art and stays true to his music.

[Here we invite readers to listen to "Bongo Bong."]

The musical style of the piece is difficult to place; the style of the music is a mixture of rap and reggae. The melody of the tune is monotonous, repetitive and calm. Changes in tempo and tone are almost all performed by the voice, as they would be in a conversation or by someone telling a story. The soft tone suggests intimacy and proximity, as if the singer was sitting next to the listener; thus, Chao constructs the situation of storytelling and closeness that I outlined above. Finally, the voice is louder than the music, which places additional emphasis on the story.

[8] Saying this, I need to point out that I am not going into the issue of dance because this is outside of the scope of my study. However, punk and pogo do solicit a different type of engagement through dance, and "King of the Bongo," being very danceable, certainly solicits engagement through dance.

On a different note I need to point out that hearing is primarily a tactile sensation: sound waves enter the human ear and touch the small ear on our tympani. Thus, sounds enter the listener's body and alter it, if only for the fracture of a second. Therefore, listening is probably one of the most intimate, because potentially intrusive, forms of perception.

The use of language (as idiom) constructs an identity that is also difficult to place but therefore, very much attached to one particular person. The rhythm of the language is defined by the strong accent of the singer. The story is told in the rhythmical and plastic language of a storyteller, in the English language; but not in British or American English. If anything, the English of the performance would be related to Patois and Caribbean dialects. However, the language of the song is not patois. Rather, it is its own, heavily accented creation.

The rhythm of the tune and the rhythm of the language are engaging with each other; when one has heard the song once and afterwards reads only the lyrics or hears only the music, one will always hear the other part as well. Due to their interactive inseparability, the rhythm of the language and the rhythm of the tune make up the rhythm of the story together. Thus, "the story" is made up of sound and rhythm as much as it is made up of the meaning of the words. The voice is the central force that holds the different components of the song together, engaging with their resistance and the resistance of its own body or, as Sennett calls it, "courting danger" (484):

> Romanticism provided a misleading vocabulary for this divide; musical notations like "innerlich" or "geistlich" ("inwardly" or "with soulful feeling") suggest the musician's soul will at a particularly expressive moment withdraw to higher realms than the physical. The musician's fingers remain, unfortunately, on strings. . . . I don't know if there's a German word like outerlichkeit — "outwardness" but there should be. (484)

In the terms in which Sennett describes it, "courting danger" is a highly physical act. Sennett describes a moment in which the resistance of the material — in his case, what the song should sound like and the possibilities of the instrument — becomes part of the song. In Chao's case, the voice would be the instrument. When it engages with the resistance of the material — the speaker's body or sound technology — sound is at its most tangible.

The engagement with resistance, the particular way of each musician to "court danger" and the terms he does it in, make for an intense performance of the voice which shows the singer in an engagement with the material that makes up his song, including the resistance that comes from within his own body. It is,

therefore, a moment of contact between the interior of the singer and everything that surrounds him. Barthes, borrowing from Kristeva, describes such a performance as the "geno-song":

> the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate "from within language and in its very materiality"; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expressions; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language — not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers, of its letters — where melody expresses how the language works and identifies with that work. (182)

In the geno-song the singer's voice, the tune and the lyrics of the song are forged together in the construction of text-internal entity of the "sonic I," constructed by all devices at the disposal of the sonic artist. The "sonic I" is ephemeral in the moment of listening but documented in the sound recording; it is reminiscent of the singer's physicality, yet intangible. Its development depends, thus, on the incompletion of the split between body and voice.

A Gathering of Voices

Chao's construction of subjectivity has wider implications. One is a redefinition of the public function of the artist and his voice. In order to bring this out clearly, and to demonstrate the connection between concepts of analysis and their usefulness for the cultural analysis of music, I briefly turn to the concept of voice.

Before I do, I need to point out that the performance of subjectivity in "Bongo Bong" is not an isolated case, but that it is characteristic for *Clandestino*. On the album, Chao experiments with continuously changing identities. In the first four songs of the album Chao performs in four different identities and three different languages. In the first song ("Clandestino"), the sonic I stages an illegal immigrant; the second song ("Desaparecido") proclaims the sonic I's evasiveness; the third song ("Bongo Bong") develops the sonic I of a street musician, and turns into the song "Je ne t'aime plus, mon amour," a song of love and loss; and so on.

The use of different languages supports these transformations. The native language and the accent of a person usually give information about their identity. However, on *Clandestino* the voice changes easily from one language to another and tells stories in the first person which can impossibly be the stories of the singer. Consequently, it becomes impossible to pin down the singer's voice to any one clear-cut identity.

None of the songs reveals the identity of the singer; neither is it ever clear in which songs the sonic I is identical with the singer-author and in which songs it is not; it is only clear that in some songs it cannot be identical with him. As a result, the listener knows who the singer is and can even hear his physical voice, but the metaphorical voice is never identical with the physical one. This split in the concept of voice emerges very strongly in recorded sonic texts because the listener can hear the singer, but cannot see him. Chao reflects on and explores the split between singer and voice on several levels.

He addresses it explicitly in the second song of the album, "Desaparecido" ("The Disappeared"). This song features a sonic I which continuously evades those who seek to apprehend him:

"Desaparecido," 0:01 — 0:28

Me llaman el desaparecido	They call me the disappeared
Que cuando llega ya se ha ido	Who when he arrives has already left
Volando vengo, volando voy	I come flying, I go flying
Deprisa deprisa a rumbo perdido	quickly quickly in a lost direction
Cuando me buscan núnca estoy	When they are looking for me I'm never there
Cuando me encuentran yo no soy	When they find me I'm not
él que está enfrente porque ya	the one that appears in the front because
Me fui corriendo más allá	I already went running further along

The song points out the impossibility of getting hold of a person who is in constant movement. But even if the ones who search for him do find him, they do not encounter the person they were looking for: "Cuando me encuentran yo no soy/ él que está en-

frente porque ya/ me fui corriendo más allá" (" When they find me I no longer am/ the one who appears in the front because / I already went running further along"). These lines indicate that disappearance does not imply that the disappeared person is not there anymore; disappeared people are always there, one just does not know where they are. The issue is not one of visibility. An invisible person is still located somewhere and remains palpable. A disappeared person is dislocated, remains possibly visible as "él que está enfrente," but cannot be sought out easily. Especially, the disappeared cannot be held or held back.

The sense of touch, so important for the performance of music, does not work in the relationship between performer and listener when the listener encounters someone who is disappeared. These lines describe the experience of failure of the listener who tries to pin down the sonic I by identifying it with Chao, the owner of the singing voice, or the other way around. Each song refutes any conclusion one might have come to while listening to the previous song.

At issue, then, is not only the body, but also the voice; the physical voice as well as the narratological concept. As I have indicated, one of the consequences of the incomplete split between body and voice is that the term "voice" takes on two meanings in reference to a sonic text. One meaning refers to the physical voice of the singer, known as the singing voice. This meaning suggests a connection to the singer as a person, to the person who physically exists and utters the sounds of the singing. The second meaning of the term "voice" has been developed in literary theory.

In her essay "Critique of Voice" Mieke Bal traces the development of the concept of "voice" from the 1920s and 1930s, when it is implicitly invoked in early narrative texts by E.M. Foster and Henry James, to the 1970s, when the term was finally introduced. She connects its emergence with theory's struggle to conceptualise "agency beyond the author" (Bal 42). While theorists tried to avoid a return to intentionalist readings of literature, they also needed to "account for the fact that a story doesn't come out of the blue, and that someone is responsible for it" (Bal 2004: 42). This meaning of "voice" resonates with the sonic I, which is also an entity produced internal to the text, and is not necessarily identical with the author. Sonic texts, however, work differently than texts that are written down in that the

physical voice is always audible; thus, the materiality of the singer is always in some way present.

The geno-song performance is crucial because as I have argued, it preserves the materiality and the physicality that the technologizing of the word (according to both Bal and Attali), destroys. Chao's geno-song performance combined with his insistence on his own evasiveness makes the double meaning of the term "voice" — the discrepancy between the metaphor or concept and the physical voice — so disturbingly obvious.

Why does Chao insist so emphatically on this split and its incompleteness that it becomes one of the major themes of *Clandestino* and, as I will demonstrate later on, also of his second solo album *Próxima Estación…Esperanza*? Attali's structural approach is helpful here. If we follow Attali's suggestion and read Chao's music as an analysis of power relations in society, and as a means of developing an alternative model, then we realize that Chao's performance of subjectivity attempts to open up an imaginary space for creative subjectivity in the social and political context. This imaginary defines a social positioning for the artist that differs from the dominant European imaginary.

To define the imaginary that Chao suggests, it is helpful to turn to Latin American practices of literature, particularly poetry. Mike Gonzalez and David Treece formulate the context in which this alternative imaginary of artistic subjectivity was developed:

> In our view, Latin American poetry has found a voice not in imitation of the West and its despairs, but in an echo of public dissent, of common language. It has broken its isolation . . . in the rediscovery of a collective voice and a collective experience found at times in popular culture, at times in shared ritual or song, at times in folk memory. What is important is that poetry has opened its frontiers to all those possible components, has excluded none, and in Ernesto Cardenal's words has sought the community of the shadows to be its voice. (xiv)

If one substitutes "music" for "poetry" in the above passage, the scenario described by Gonzalez and Treece captures Chao's musical practice quite well. The importance of Latin America for Chao's work is well-known, and the soundscape of *Clandestino* is steeped in Latin American sounds, rhythms, recordings, and tunes. It is therefore not far-fetched to argue that Chao — consciously or not — evokes the Latin American poetic tradition

that Gonzalez and Treece call "public poetry" and applies it to contemporary music.

In *Clandestino* this strategy is clearly framed within a political situation. Chao positions himself by the red star on the cover, the dedication of the album to the EZLN, the use of EZLN sound material in the album, the address of issues like illegal immigration, the exploitation of the South, hunger, and other burning issues in the songs. Last but not least, Chao frames *Clandestino* in the political realm by the subtitle of the album "…esperando la última ola" ("waiting for the last wave"), which in the course of the album emerges as one of the major themes.

To situate himself and his album in this context, Chao features other voices in *Clandestino* through heterosonic recordings. In the song "Mentira" ("Lie"), Chao picks up and elaborates on a term that is frequently used by the EZLN. They have used it as a term of protest against the betrayals of indigenous communities and of the EZLN by those in power. The Subcomandante Marcos has also used the term *mentira* to point out the appropriation of language by power and to analyse the way in which this appropriation is interfering with peoples' possibilities to communicate with each other.[9]

In the song "Mentira" in *Clandestino* Chao explores the consequences of *mentira*'s power:

"Mentira," 0:01-0:47

Mentira lo que dice	What is said is a lie
Mentira lo que da	What is given is a lie
Mentira lo que va	What goes is a lie
Mentira la mentira	a lie is a lie
Mentira la verdad	the truth is a lie
Mentira lo que cuece	What cooks below
Bajo la oscuridad	the darkness is a lie
Mentira el amor	love is a lie
Mentira el sabor	flavour is a lie
Mentira la que manda	mentira rules
Mentira comanda	mentira commands
Mentira la tristeza	the sadness is a lie

[9] For one example see Marcos 2003b.

Cuando empieza	when the lie begins
Mentira no se va	it doesn't leave

As this lyric demonstrates, "mentira" is an attitude, not a single act. Once it it is put into place it never leaves, but infiltritates itself into every single part of life and initiates a vicious circle until even "mentira la mentira/ mentira la verdad" ("the lie is a lie/ the truth is a lie"). The sonic I is lonely and isolated in a world in which truthful communication is becoming increasingly impossible:

"Mentira," 2:04 ff.

Todo es mentira en este mundo	Everything in this world is a lie
Todo es mentira la verdad	Everything is a lie, that's true
Todo es mentira yo me digo	Everything is a lie, I tell myself
Todo es mentira	Everything is a lie
¿Por qué será?	Why would that be?

The song ends with a recording from a radio news broadcast about the refusal of the U.S. to sign the Kyoto protocol, inviting the listener to elaborate on the connection between the term, its consequences and the concrete example.

In a later song "Luna y sol" ("Moon and Sun"), Chao picks up the term mentira again. The text of the song takes back up a theme of the song "Mentira," but this time Chao adds a different note:

"Luna y sol"

Todo es mentira en este mundo	Everything in this world is a lie
Todo es mentira la verdad	Everything is a lie, that's true
Todo es mentira yo me digo	Everything is a lie, I tell myself
Todo es mentira	Everything is a lie
¿Por qué sera?	Why would that be?
Esperando la última ola	Waiting for the last wave
Esperando la última ola	Waiting for the last wave

"Esperando la última ola," "Waiting for the last wave," adds a hopeful, yet ambiguous, touch to the song, one that had not been there before. It indicates that something has started moving, that there is hope for a change. Consequently, the song ends on a different note:

"Luna y sol," 1:50 ff.

Buscando un ideal	Looking for an ideal
Buscando un ideal	Looking for an ideal
¿Cuando será?	When will it be?
¿Cuando será?	When will it be?
¿Por dónde saldrá el sol?	Where will the sun come through?

and with a recording of the 4th manifesto of the Zapatistas, read by the Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. The quoted text contains the promise to remain true to their principles, demands basic rights and necessities for everyone, and makes the request to promulgate the manifesto.[10] The song suggests that the struggle is not lost, but that it is only just beginning, and it brings in the EZLN as an important reason for hope.

Chao's exploration of his own voice and of other voices in sonic texts is an example of the successful mobilization of the incomplete split between singer and voice. Chao's voice can credibly put forward the voices of others because due to the incomplete split between body and voice, his voice is not necessarily an expression of his own subjectivity. At the same time, the incompleteness of the split does not allow for complete abstraction of the voice from the singer. This means that the singer assumes the responsibility for the causes he articulates. The inclusion of other voices among the song posits that the voice of the singer is always in dialogue with other voices. Hence, his voice is constantly struggling against isolation and performs a constant dialogue with other voices. His subjectivity is constructed out of this dialogue, made possible by a version of the "outwardness" described by Sennett, and his sonic texts stage this process of constructing subjectivity, so that his own authority and the ways

[10] The text of the manifesto is available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese at http://www.ezln.org/documentos/index.html.

in which he performs it can be put up for discussion, if his listeners wish to do so.

Trilanguaging Media

In songs such as "Mentira" Chao starts to develop a strategy that I propose to call the trilanguaging of the media of enunciation. This strategy places the construction and performance of subjectivity in sonic texts on the intersection between his performance of subjectivity and his work with sounds, music, and words.

One consequence of the technologization of the word has been an acute sensibility to the difference between "sounds" and "words," and the institutionalization of music that, as Attali describes it, has led to an equally acute sense of the difference between "sounds," "music," and "words." "The technologization of the word" evokes Walter Ong's seminal study *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982). Ong argues that the introduction of print led to a profound change in speakers' and listeners' experience of the words they speak and hear because vision replaced orality as the most frequent mode of the perception of words. According to Ong,

> [s]ight isolates, sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer. [. . .] Vision comes to a human being from one direction at a time [. . .]. When I hear, however, I gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once: I am at the center of my auditory world, which envelops me, establishing me as a kind of core of sensation and existence. (72)

In this passage, sounds are the agent: they "envelop" the listener. Thus, the auditory experience according to Ong is much less controlled than the visual experience.

Ong's interpretation of the technologizing of the word as a strategy to control stimuli and their effect on the listener resonates with Attali's analysis of the political economy of music. According to Attali, the institutionalization of music served to contain and control music's effect on listeners. Almost paradoxically, this has led to an increased sensibility of listeners to the difference between "music," "words," and "sounds." "Music"

is technologized, institutionalized, obeys certain rules and is therefore controllable. “Words” are non-music but, at least in writing, are subjected to an analogous regime of control as music is. In contradistinction to music and words, sounds have not been subjected to a process of institutionalization. More often than not, they are conceptualized as random noise. Chao works with this distinction between the three categories and by doing so, recuperates music from the technologized, institutionalized, and controllable, and to redefine music and words as “sounds.” However, rather than collapsing the boundaries between the three, he performs the borderlands between sound, music and words as a place of encounter and of interaction. One song that clearly brings out some of the techniques and strategies he uses is the song “La despedida” (“The Goodbye”), one of the last songs of *Clandestino*.

“La despedida” is about the end of a love story and of the sonic I’s failed attempt to come to closure with it. Clearly, the story is a painful one and is therefore not easily told. In the beginning of the song the voice is dominant and clear. It almost lacks timbre, thus performing a lack of emotion that was obviously difficult to achieve. The words are clearly articulated, as if the singer was repeating a text he had learned by heart before.

[Here we invite readers to listen to the track “La despedida” in its entirety.]

The forced lack of timbre bears witness to the effort the singer has to make to come to a closure. When he can finally say “At last I’m at peace,” a chorus starts softly singing “se acabó, se acabó” (“it’s over, it’s over”). The singer responds to the chorus by repeating what he said before:

Ya estoy curado, anestesiado	At last I’m cured, anaesthesized
ya me he olvidado	At last I have forgotten
Ya estoy curado, anestesiado	At last I’m cured, anaesthesized
ya me he olvidado	At last I have forgotten

But the soft voices of the chorus break down his resistance. He ends the song with the acknowledgement that in spite of everything he has just said he is not capable of saying goodbye:

"La despedida," 1:45-2:30

Te espero siempre mi amor	I will always wait for you, my love
cada hora, cada día	every hour, every day
Te espero siempre, mi amor	I will always wait for you, my love
cada minuto que yo viva	every minute I will live
Te espero siempre, mi amor	I will always wait for you, my love
no te olvido y te quiero	I won't forget you and I love you
Te espero siempre, mi amor	I will always wait for you, my love
Sé que un día volverás	I know you will come back one day

During the last line one hears beeps in the backgrounds, and after several beeps, an answering machine is heard. One hears three messages from different people, calling just to say hello or to see if someone is home. The one message that the sonic I is waiting for is missing.

My point here is that "La despedida" is only understandable if one includes the recordings that are not part of traditional "song-material" like voice and music. This inclusion is necessary because the meaning of the song is produced by the tension between different elements: the lyrics themselves, the two different tones in the voice of the singer, the singer and the chorus and, most notably, the answering machine recordings. The lyrics, the music and the other sounds that are part of the song do not complement each other by reaffirming each other's message or by adding a context. Rather, they break through each other's space and through each other's boundaries. Only when we take this into account do we realize that "La despedida" is not about a goodbye, but about the impossibility of saying goodbye. Thus, the complex interaction between different sonic elements demonstrates rather than explains a complex, multi-layered situation. I can say this differently: Chao "trilanguages" the media of enunciation that are at his disposal to include sounds, musical elements and words on equal terms. In terms of the locus of enunciation this leads to a splitting up of the socially delimited loci of enunciation of the musician, of the speaker/singer, and of "sounds" that have no definable source of origin. As a consequence, the social power and the authority that are assigned to those claiming either of these loci of enunciation — i.e. of the musician, of the speaker/singer or of the sound artist — are also shattered.

Among the songs on *Clandestino*, "La despedida" most clearly introduces a technique that I will call "sonic layering." In doing so, I develop an argument made by Ángela Rivas Gamboa in an essay on Mano Negra, the band that Chao played with before he started his solo career. She argues that Mano Negra worked with what she calls "imágenes sonoras" ("sonic images"). Complementary to the sonic images the band also "quoted" sounds:

> The effect of these quotations of sound is a non-linear argument that can place multiple histories in the same moment instead of telling a history with a linear sequence. The quoted fragments come from very different sources: old popular song, radio programs, proverbs, colloquial expressions, lyrics that are taken from informal language, musical sequences, urban sounds, rhythmic and onomatopoeic expressions. Each of these sonic quotes is important in its own right, but the key to the sonic images is their purposeful juxtaposition and their simultaneity. (99)

In "La despedida" Chao quotes and juxtaposes sounds in order to produce meaning and to "tell a story" about simultaneous and contradictory feelings. However, since my analysis focuses on the sonic dimension of Chao's work, I prefer the term "sonic layering" over Rivas Gamboa's "sonic images."

In his second album *Próxima Estación…Esperanza* Chao uses sonic layering to reframe and destabilize many of the sounds and sonic motives he introduced in *Clandestino*, thus questioning the power structure he himself established through the organization of these sounds. This artistic technique or strategy of Chao's has an impact on possible conceptualizations of Chao's work within the social structure of music: on *Clandestino*, Chao documents the search for an alternative music. On *Esperanza*, Chao takes the very concept of "music," and of subjectivity in music, to its limits.

Esperanza starts with a mixture of noises: radio announcements, commentary of a radio station, an unarticulated chorus of voices, video game noises, ring tones, beeps, and other unidentifiable sounds. The mixture of these sounds continues for several seconds before the song "Merry Blues" crystallizes out of the seemingly chaotic amalgamation of sounds. "Merry Blues" introduces many of the themes of the CD. Most of the sounds we hear in the beginning, during and in the end of "Merry Blues" will later on return in the album, sometimes in prominent places,

sometimes deeply woven into the texture of the songs. Important sonic themes will be the recordings "Atento!" ("Attention!"), and "Permanece a la escucha! Permanece a la escucha!" ("Stay tuned and keep listening!"), but also many of the ringing tones and video game noises. The song crystallizes out of these noises, which points to a sense of connectedness between music and the seemingly chaotic sounds of the world: the music in the album emerges out of the meeting of many different sounds, responds to them, interacts with them, and is therefore inseparably connected with the world, not an escape from it.

The song's cheerful tone establishes the generally happy and positive tone of the album. Its title "Merry Blues" is an oxymoron indicating a sense of self-irony and humour: a blues can be many things — troubled, sad, rebellious — but merriness is not usually considered to be one of its characteristics. Through a play between the title and the music the song furthermore shows the interaction between music and language: the linguistic oxymoron of the title is picked up through a musical oxymoron in the song's tune and rhythm, which are not blues.[11]

The lyrics feature a sonic I who is feeling "blue": the person he is infatuated with is not available, either because she is absent or because she does not respond to his feelings. However, rather than complaining, the sonic I is celebrating "being blue" in a cheerful manner and "high" spirits, through playful lyrics. In this initial combination, the sounds that are introduced suggest eclecticism based on the openness for different sounds. "Merry Blues" proposes one way of interacting with sonic diversity and with the bittersweetness of life and love through an intercultural perspective.

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[11] For my own reasons of space I cannot go into the significance of the oxymoron as a figure of speech and a metaphor for the articulation of life in a globalised world. It is one of the most adequate figures of speech for the experience of globalisation and interculturality. On *Esperanza,* Chao articulates this experience verbally and sonically. Both Chao and the Subcomandante Marcos often use the oxymoron explicitly and implicitly. The clearest theoretical reflection on the oxymoron and its relevance for the analysis of our contemporary situation can be found in Marcos 2000. The essay is thematically not related to the topics I have identified on Chao's albums. However, I would suggest that the artists who share this frame of reference work creatively with each other's influence.

The sonic motives reflected upon in the song "La primavera" shed a different light on the cheerfulness of sonic interculturality. They make the bridge to one of the thematic focuses of *Esperanza*, the situatedness of the subject in time and space. The recordings are the time announcements of the Cuban radio station Radio Reloj. Radio Reloj broadcasts nothing but time announcements for different places in the world. The same recordings already figured in *Clandestino*, most notably in the song "Je ne t'aime plus." In this song they underlined the theme of separation and of travel. In *Esperanza*, however, the time announcements feature much more prominently. Also, other than in *Clandestino,* they are now framed within and provide the frame for a theme which exceeds the personal significance of love and loss, and which can be summed up in the question "where and when are we?" The time announcements are introduced in the song "La primavera," one of the best known, in its beauty most haunting, and in its frequent recurrence most characteristic musical themes of the album. The song starts off with the question "¿Qué hora son mi corazón?" ("What time is it, my heart?"), and continues to apply this questin to different locations in the world, for example England, Gibraltar, Fisterra, Japan, Mozambique, Washington. The questions are interspersed with more reflective questions like "¿Qué hora son la vida entera?" (What time is it in life?), the chorus-like lines "¡Nos engañaron byebyeboom! / Nos engañaron con la primavera! ¿Nos engañaron byebyeboom!" ("They deceived us bybyeboom! They deceived us with spring!), and the repetitive time announcements.

By means of the inclusion of the time announcements, "La primavera" takes the questions of "time" and "space" to a metaphorical level. The haunting question of "What time is it?" asked in the political context of the album suggests other questions, such as "What is happening?," "At which point in history are we?," "What can we do?," "Will we do anything?" This interpretation is strengthened by the double meaning of "mi corazón," which can be a term of endearment or can literally mean "my heart" and refer metaphorically to the most intimate manifestation of subjectivity. The interpretation of time as much more than a fixed moment in someone's subjective perception is also supported by lines such as "¿Qué hora son la vida entera?" and "Nos engañaron con la primavera." These lines evoke the

notion that it is time to do something, to rebel against the deception, to make the moment happen.

Simultaneously "the point in time" becomes dislocated and subjective. There is a time difference between Washington and Mozambique. Also, many of the places he names are suggestive of a larger history. The combination of England and Gibraltar invites the reference to colonialism. The combination of Japan, Mozambique and Washington evokes the difference between North and South, between the First World and Africa, and it alludes to civil war and underdevelopment that are the consequences of imperialism. While the inhabitants of these different places live in the same time, they do not live under the same conditions. Hence, they do not conceive of each other as of "living at the same time" — yet, they are. Chao suggests in "La primavera" that we all live in personal and global time at once and thus, are always connected to what is around us. By connecting time with always different locations he connects the ephemeral with the physical and the location of our existence with the moment of our existence. The recurrences of the time announcement and the theme of "La primavera" throughout the album turn these issues into a recurring theme that informs many of the topics addressed by other songs.

The combination of space and time in Chao's work leads to the creation of a locus of enunciation that is spatially mobile and at the same time, temporally — or historically — situated. By finding a language and a sound that articulates and performs the connection between the two he creates maps that give access to these loci of enunciation and to the thought that interacts with the sounds that are characteristic of them. Chao's commitment to a particular moment in time implies his commitment to the construction of just and democratic societies. Thus, the sonic maps he creates are of sound as much as they are of thought, of art as much as of resistance, of realities as much as of imaginaries.

Chao's work with sounds reinforces his connection to his environment. Sounds have escaped the institutionalization of music. Their prominence in Chao's work performs the connection of his sonic texts with their environment. There is a definite analogy with his construction of subjectivity: just as his voice is partially made up voices that are not his own, his music is made up of sounds other than music. To write and perform such sonic texts one has to be a keen listener.

Musicians and *Jongleurs*: The Politics of Sonic Production

Previously I have insisted on the importance of the structures that determine the context in which sonic texts are created. Yet, my analysis so far has focused on text-internal elements of Chao's work and on the way that he himself connects his songs with his surroundings. To complement these analyses I will now, in closing, read the sonic I produced in "Bongo Bong" through the figure of the street musician.

In "Bongo Bong" we encounter two main characters: the figure of the street musician and Chao's voice. At first glance his story seems innocent and naïve. However, it loses its innocence when placed in a larger context of urban politics. In recent years street musicians were among the first to be kicked off the streets by city councils who want to "clean up" their cities, for example in Paris, Barcelona and Amsterdam. One of the worst repercussions they can suffer is the confiscation of their instruments by the police. To redeem them, the musicians have to pay a fine; difficult undertakings for people who make their living off the instruments that have been taken from them. For those musicians who are in Europe illegally, getting into trouble with the police for playing on the street also means that they will be deported.

I contend that Chao's act of making a street musician one of the central speakers of his album should not simply be understood in terms of "giving voice." His play with the identity of the "I" and of the "sonic I" has a wider dimension which emerges more clearly upon reading "Bongo Bong" against Attali's analysis of the medieval *jongleur*. Attali argues that in the Middle Ages, musicians moved from place to place and were referred to with the same term that was used for other street artists:

> The term *jongleur*, derived from the Latin *joculare* ("to entertain"), designated both musicians (instrumentalists and vocalists) and other entertainers (mimes, acrobats, buffoons, etc.). At the time, these functions were inseparable. The *jongleur* had no fixed employment; he moved from place to place, offering his services in private residences. He *was* music and the spectacle of the body. He alone created it, carried it with him, and completely organized its circulation within society. (14)

The *jongleur* was then an autonomous figure. His relationship to music was immediate: there was no separation between himself and his music; music did not exist independently of its maker. This changed in the 14th century. At this time the upper class started to monopolize music and its production:

> . . . the techniques of written and polyphonic music spread from court to court and distanced the courts from the people: nobles would buy musicians trained in church choirs and order them to play solemn songs to celebrate their victories, light songs for entertainment, orchestrated dances, etc. Musicians became professionals bound to a single master, *domestics*, producers of spectacles exclusively reserved for a minority. (15)

The institutionalisation of music goes hand in hand with a process of settling down for musicians, processes of organizing themselves and, while making a better living, relinquishing their autonomy on the production of music to the service of those that paid their salaries:

> Within three centuries, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth, the courts had banished the *jongleurs*, the voice of the people, and no longer listened to anything but scored music performed by salaried musicians. Power had taken hold, becoming hierarchical and distant. (15)

Musicians complied with the policies of power. They organized in guilds and started "shutting out the *jongleurs*, who were independent and often nonprofessional musicians." The street musician as an uncontrollable performer in whom physicality and music are inseparable, and as a performer who is always on the move and on the road and therefore cannot be incorporated into a capitalist system, is the contemporary version of the *jongleur*.

Chao's performance of his sonic I in "Bongo Bong" uncomfortably foregrounds the tension between musician and *jongleur*: the tone performs the inseparability of physicality and music, whereas the incomplete split between body and voice reminds us of the fact that the physical singer is a famous musician. Consequently, Chao's sonic I addresses the tension between established musician and street musician, between being graspable by the system and constantly dodging it.

A second issue that becomes pertinent in Chao's construction of his sonic I as a street musician and his evocation of the *jongleur*

is that of "giving voice." I will raise a provocative question here: does Chao "give voice" to the street musician, or does the street musician "give a voice" to Chao? Chao, owner of the singing voice, can give voice to the *jongleur* from a comfortable position within the system of established musicians. This act of "giving voice" could be interpreted as putting his power to good use. However, I suggest that something else is happening here.

My framing of Chao's performance of subjectivity through the sonic I within the structures brought out by Attali, shows that issues of musical identity are wrapped up with issues of power. This entanglement is much more complex than simply the question of having access to the international music market, which equals having access to music production companies, which equals becoming heard in many places of the world and earning money, fame, reputation, and power. It is also more complex than a re-appropriation of the music industry in order to broadcast a message of resistance to the very system that produced and maintains the music industry. Chao makes this quite clear when, instead of "giving voice" from his own position of success to those who are not heard, he claims access to the streets and other public spaces for himself and others, spaces in which the vital interaction between the people and the *jongleur* can take place. What he suggests, then, is that his voice depends on the voice of the street musician, not the other way around.[12]

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[12] It is a tremendous challenge to translate such a conceptualization of the artist through the performance into a public figure. The artist has to be absolutely consequent to do so. Just as important as his contribution to such a project is the collaboration of his audience. However, many audiences are not interested in such alternatives that exclude the possibilities of leadership, and the mass media usually refuse to even acknowledge the possibility of their existence. Chao's own public figure is a case in point.

Part of the problem is that at this moment in time we have only a very limited terminology at our disposal to even conceptualize such a complete turning on its head of the accepted notions of artistic authority, let alone reflect on such models when they are already practiced.

I should maybe make it absolutely clear that I am not proposing Chao's artistic practice as the ideal and only alternative; if I did this, I would endorse protagonism through the back door. However, I do think that Chao's work is an important interlocutor for theoretical work that seeks to develop alternative conceptualizations of the artist as a public figure. For an analysis of Chao's public figure see Giadas (2007).

Reformulating this position through the terminology I used to conceptualize the performance of subjectivity through the geno-song, one can say that in Chao's case, the subjectivity of the singer is inseparably bound up with the "outwardness" Sennett describes. Instead of turning inwards and looking for the singer's/speaker's "inner essence," Chao's voice turns "outwards" towards the people, the places and the practices that surround the singer. Consequently, his practice of voice is a constant negotiation of his subjectivity and his surroundings, a constant practice of absorption and transformation, of listening and response and consequently, of change. When he turns "outwards" and conducts, or reflects on, his engagement with those who are around him in the moment of "outwardness" through the grain of the voice, his geno-song can become the access to — and not the replacement of — those who are around him.

Conclusion

This brings me back to Chao's "gathering of voices." The phrase coined by Gonzalez and Treece brings out that subjectivity and collectivity are not contradictory to each other. Even when individual voices join each other in a collective, each of them always maintains a degree of individuality.

In the introduction to this essay I took up the Subcomandante Marcos' proposition that resistance in our day and age requires the resolve of the individual just as much as it requires the willingness to associate with others. Resistance, then, relies on the recognition of mutual differences, and on the identification of shared convictions, ideals, and aims. To be able to practice such strategies of resistance it is necessary to develop conceptualizations of subjectivity that permit and encourage them, and that do not see the individual and the collective as contradictory. Therefore, while the methodology developed by scholars like Attali is useful and even indispensable, it also needs to be reconsidered and developed in our contemporary context.

One of the most important and valuable propositions of Attali's is to understand music as a form of theorizing and as a way of speaking to realities. It has important implications for academic analysis, and I have tried to put them into practice in this essay. Listening to Chao's music as one way of understanding the world has enabled me to learn from his practice, rather than

to (re-)organize it in a particular way. This reinforces the view that performance and conceptualization, theory and art, and theory and practice are not mutually exclusive, but enrich each other, propel each other forward, and depend upon each other. Accepting differences and identifying shared concerns is therefore not only indispensable to action, but also to the production of thought and knowledge, that is, if we want to make the boundaries between different spaces and kinds of knowledge production permeable.

However, my analysis of the politics of sonic production has brought to the fore certain tensions in Chao's practice. These tensions arise precisely because his work is produced and distributed in the context of a music industry that homogenizes musical production, and that encourages practices of protagonism that Chao seeks to undermine in his work. His constantly changing identities and yet, his and his listeners' inevitable awareness of Chao as a famous musician, bear witness to the practical limits of the subjectivity he performs and consequently, to the strategies of resistance that can be developed out of such a subjectivity. This drives home the importance of collectivity and collective action: only if listeners are willing to accept and practice the complex conceptualizations of resistance and subjectivity that Chao and the Subcomandante Marcos propose from very different locations, including their problematization of protagonism, can these conceptualizations unfold their full political potential. This is not (only) up to Chao, nor can any theorist or political militant provide a manual for resistance developed out of such performances and conceptualizations.

The tools for alternative performances of subjectivity sometimes come from unexpected areas. In this case, sound technology no longer causes the musician's alienation from his music, or the listeners' alienation from the music and the musician. Instead, it is used to sound both the musician and the listener back into the sonic text, while remaining conscious of and reflecting on the difference between live performance and recording. This difference and its consequences are addressed through the incomplete split between body and voice and through the sonic I, the construction of which depends upon the incompleteness of this split. I hope that through the development of analytical tools for performances on the sound recordings and their connection with wider political implications and concepts

this essay has made a contribution to an academic practice that accepts musicians as interlocutors, and music as one way of theorizing the world.

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